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themselves, recoiling on their sliding runners. A fixed unity of many harmonious organs."

For others—for his accounts of agony, grief, death, the grappling of the mind with horror,—he finds words of bare simplicity. But always in the intensity, the impassioned calmness, of his realizations he is a poet.

A STUDY IN ENGLISH METRICS. By Adelaide Crapsey. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1918.

At first thought it seems extraordinary that English verse, the effect of which is so instantly felt, except in a few cases, by even the untutored ear, should on analysis turn out to be so complex and subtle an affair that a scholar of undoubted poetic appreciativeness, like Professor Saintsbury for instance, may devote a whole volume to the subject without convincing a majority of his readers that he has reached the root of the matter. Such, however, is the fact. English poets have written melodiously, they hardly knew how, but with full confidence that their readers would feel the intended effect. The readers for the most part have felt the intended effect, but have been even less able than the poets to explain it.

After reading a number of treatises on English verse, no two agreeing, one may be tempted to conclude that all the simple schemes—like the pure accentual scheme—are inadequate, and all the complex ones pedantically impossible. To lose interest in the subject, however, just because it proves so refractory to the touch of common sense or of scientific analysis, would be most unwise. Poetry—even on the metrical side—is not an applied science, but an art. Like every true art, it involves the mutual adjustment of several different elements that were not originally made with a view to fitting together like mortise and tenon. The metricist, like the poet in a larger sense, is therefore a *trouvère*, a "finder." The general reader may appreciate the effect of his discoveries; the critic must make them after the poet.

No one has set forth the theory of verse-structure in its true subtlety more simply and clearly than has Miss Crapsey. Within the structure of English verse, she holds, must be recognized "a complex of three inter-existent structures: 1, the verse-form proper, itself two-fold, consisting of (a) the rhythmic arrangement and (b) the syllabic arrangement by means of which the rhythm is exteriorized; and, 2, the substructural phonetic speech-arrangement."

The materials with which a poet has to work are words, considered not merely as symbols of thought or as rhetorical or grammatical units, but as collections of syllables. It is obvious, therefore, that the extent and nature of a poet's vocabulary ought to have an important bearing upon his art as a metricist. This clue Miss Crapsey methodically followed up. She derived a scale of polysyllabic occurrence from an analysis of the vocabularies found in (a) 125 nursery rhymes, (b) the poems of Milton, (c) the poems of Pope. The result was the discovery that poetic vocabularies fall into three main groups according to the percentage of polysyllables employed. This discovery was

confirmed by a testing of the scale from the works of Tennyson, Swinburne, Francis Thompson, and Maurice Hewlett. The results of all these tests are tabulated.

Further, Miss Crapsey found that with the different vocabularies were associated important differences in technique. The use of a highly polysyllabic vocabulary introduces a different order of metrical problems from those encountered by the user of a mono-disyllabic vocabulary. One such problem is that of the unaccented syllable or the syllable having a secondary accent, which affects the verse-structure in various and unexpected ways, according as it does or does not coincide with the verse-accent.

The exact critical bearing of all this is not yet wholly clear. Certainly one cannot censure a poet like Tennyson on the ground that he reduced his vocabulary for the sake of simplifying metrical difficulties, nor could one commend a poetic tyro for employing a vocabulary like that of Milton or of Francis Thompson for the sake of finding metrical problems over which to triumph. The poet, like any other writer, is under an obligation to choose the right word to express his meaning, and upon the integrity of his choice quite as much as upon the degree of technical difficulty overcome will depend the critic's estimate of the result. The real difficulty in metrical criticism is the difficulty of separating two elements—meaning and meter—which the poet has done his best to combine, and which were perhaps hardly sundered in his mind.

It is a thousand pities that Miss Crapsey did not live to work out more fully the critical implications of a thesis which, as she would have treated it, must surely have proved fertile.